COLORED SAILS

JEANNE DE LAMARTER

MY
BOOK
Virginia McClain

COLORED SAILS

Colored Sails, by Jeanne de Lamarter [Packard], is a collection of eager, deft poems from a young and unspoiled pen.

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COLORED SAILS

by

JEANNE DE LAMARTER

1930

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To
C. R. B.

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PART ONE

INCANTATRICE

I shall have a schooner with smooth decks
and colored sails to match the sunset glow.
I shall not care which way the winds may blow,
but, trusting, I shall watch them play aloft
caressing every thread of canvas there.

There shall be storerooms
made for many things
that glisten and glow
in darkness and in light:
cigarettes like tiny ruddy lanterns
gleaming soft
when we have been becalmed,
and no wind fans them;
wines, that eloquent
with impassioned color,
may catch the light
of some small modest star
and hold it captive
for a moment's time;
books to read
when silence is a doorway
admitting our eyes
into a strange new world
where characters are real
and we talk with them.
We shall have singing—
ballads and Christmas carols—
singing not pretty,
but beautiful in the night wind.

This will be my little life, this schooner.
Shallop of glee in water and in sky,
laughing in blue-green depths and snowy foam
and sad in turn with new moons
and with loveliness
too pulsing, yet too silent to be heard on land.

Jack London made his Martin Eden know it,
that longing for eternal cool green water.
What heaven could be lovelier than this:
Pale-colored silence, and a soothing motion
rhythmic with the moon and all the stars,
and fragrant with sea-flowers and long grasses?

GHOSTS

How could I know when that one moon rose red
that there would never be another one
to silhouette a shadow-dusted head?
How could I know one early silent sun
would burn again as a candle for the dead?

(There is a timid ghost among the trees
lost and hunting broken melodies.)

Remember now the purity of white
birches in the chastity of dusk.
Never let your heart remember light
almost unholy in dark eyes, and musk
that gave us, breathless, all the scent of night.

(There is a timid ghost among the trees
lost and singing broken melodies.)

SCARLET COAT

Scarlet coat and tousled hair—
I saw her walking thru the park,
and suddenly the growing dark
that lingered in the autumn air

was still. I felt a gentle glow
surround me and the beating sea,
and winds that capered endlessly
were quieted and soft and low.

She walked as careless as the night
that comes when leaves are bright and red.
I looked, and saw her windblown head
a silhouette against the light

that lingered sadly in the sky.
The trees along the curving street
hid from me her silent feet.
And darkness on the wind flew by.

TO MARISE

With poems in her eyes
and laughter in her hair
she climbed high rocks with me;
we talked together there

of poetry, and Christ,
and those who pagan are;
of strange reincarnation,
of the power of a star—

We talked delightedly—
we were almost wise.
Better I remember
the poems in her eyes.

FROM THE HILL

The great clouds gather and the sun still there
throws horizontal light upon the air.

What beauty and what pain you bring to me
I cherish with a song and hymn with sighs.

Breathless from running, and with loving eyes
I watch the valley from the hill and see
some I loved and others coming on,
contentment on their faces like the wan
light on house tops when the sun has gone.

LAURA

(Young Woodley)

Twilight flutters from her limbs
so firm and slender when she walks,
and softly, always, when she talks
her voice reechoes distant hymns.

Her eyes, like bluebells in the dawn,
are never silent, never still—
oh, have you ever seen a hill
look sadly where the sun has gone?

She walked to meet a death one night
where moon lay warmly on the grass,
and listening, heard footsteps pass
and leave her lonely in the light.

WITH ONLY WIND

This night without the moon,
with only wind,
this is the night
that I have waited for.

The trees are wild
and pulling at their roots
as schooners tug at anchor,
and their leaves
toss back and forward
over the shadowy sky
in ceaseless rhythm.

I have been waiting for this night,
this wind,
that I may walk again
on certain paths
that have no destination,
paths that cease
gradually
in water under brushwood.

There the winds
make booming cavernous sounds
and leaves thrash still more wildly
and go free.
And I must scream with glee
for knowing
that autumn is again
and is in me.

GIRL WITH A SOFT VOICE

She hates to speak
unnecessary words,
and yet sometimes
her tongue fairly dances along
in fancy.
She hates the sound of a voice
putting tags
on beauty.

TWO MOONS

There are two moons for me:
one in the sky
and one that lies
upon the rippled water.
The high one hangs without a breath
farther and more chaste than death.
That moon is my soul.

The low one lies upon the lake
(not one but ten when the ripples break)
each like the other
yet each different.
Those are my mooded body
torn apart
piece by piece
and each piece wanting all
of something else
until I am bewildered by myself.

Then I see my soul
serene and high
and know my way
across my world, my sky.

CHANCEL

(Fourth Presbyterian Church)

In the organ loft
of a great church—
the sweetness of a flute
dances in the air;
and way, way up
in the darkness,
the blood-red windows
gleam formally.

GREEN WATERS

It was a great green pool as deep as hell,
darker and more silent than a well.
Green the grasses at the water's rim,
green the olive trees reflected, dim,
unquivering in the water's emerald deeps.
And there, far fathoms down its secret sleeps.

I had been reading by the quiet pool
where the water on my feet was cool
and green upon the warm white flesh of me,
and I had laid my book quite willingly
closed, beside me while I watched the dusk
come, and breathed the violet and musk.

Suddenly right at the water's side
a naked man stood, arms upstretched, and cried.
Silently he wept, his fingers white
seeming to reach for something of the night.
I thought I saw strange wounds upon his hand.
He whispered words I could not understand,
and just below his heart was dripping blood
brighter than a red geranium bud.
He poised a moment, taking one great breath,
and said quite simply, with his eyes closed, "Death."
He dived without a sound into that night
of liquid green, his naked body white
and sleek and graceful underneath the cool
translucent emerald of that silent pool.

No bubbles rose, no ripples played around,
but looking with strange eyes, upon the ground
where he had stood I saw a gleam like glass:
a broken halo lay upon the grass.

WILD IRIS

Wild iris in the rain
purple
as the brooding storm-clouds
over the water.
And low in the sky
one bird
glides with taut wings
down the wind.

I cool my face
with wild iris
in the rain.

LITTLE HILLS

These little hills are quite as proud as I—
they bear the feet and fingers of the sky.

I bear on me white avenues of truth
and I am proud of greater things than youth.

I have met raphsody and all its pain
and I have heard the singing in the rain.

Oh, as the little hills stand proudly by
bearing their ecstacy, why, so do I!

I NEED NEW DREAMS

I have danced on my dreams
until they are torn and dirty
and now I have only
the bare wooden floor to dance on
and it hurts my feet!
I need some new dreams.

Tonight I shall climb the willow
and sit on the lowest branch
in the warm still moonlight
and breathe the smell of things growing
and wait for my lover.

If he comes
I shall abandon myself to kisses.
If he does not come
I shall dream!

IN BENDA WOOD

There are great ferns
bending in green arcs
above the path.
And scarlet and yellow birds
fly from tree to tree,
frantic with song.

But I love Benda Wood
because there is a song there
that I have never heard.

FOR EJLERT LOVBORG

Before the ways of love I am not brave—
or am I brave?—I could not bear to see
my eager joy in you and yours in me
bow down to habit, and the nights we gave
to beauty turn to orbits for desire
that has not kept its breathlessness and fire.

Much easier it was for me to kill
love's free swift march than see the ghostly tread
and lagging feet of one whose steps are dead
before me, lying patient and too still
to carry love. I think I was afraid
we could not keep the paradise we made!

PART TWO

HAPPINESS

Oh, Mother, don't you love the wind?
It circles round the hill.
It makes my hair stand up on end,
and makes my breath stand still!

Oh, Mother, don't you love the wind?
It whistles, flying by.
It makes umbrellas of my dress,
and tumbles up the sky!

IMAGINATION

Oh I saw a white horse go galloping by
to the tune of a wind in the high blue sky!
The horse had no rider—the rider was I
as I watched the white horse go galloping by.

He carried me lightly—so lightly he flew,
and the wind sent us higher up into the blue.
The horse rose so gaily—so gaily he flew
that the wind started laughing high up in the blue!

The white horse and I reached the end of the sky;
and we had a secret, the white horse and I.
But the white horse forgot; and went galloping by.

TO MY LOVE

Love me when the May wind blows
for then my heart is never still.
It wanders to a green-gowned hill
where apple trees wear summer snows.

May the maid, invitingly,
beckons with her slender hands,
strewing perfume on the lands
that once lay by so drearily.

May has eyes more wildly blue
than all the brilliance in the sky.
Wait until she's gone and I
will strangely need the heart of you.

I KNOW A SECRET!

Last night the sky
was covered with dirty gray clouds,
and God didn't like it,
so He called His angels together
and said to them,
"I wish you to get your scrubbing-brushes
and water-pails and soap
and scrub the sky until it shines."

So the angels all said "Yes, Sir."
and got their scrubbing-brushes
and water-pails and soap,
and they all took off their wings
and hung them on the stars.
The angels sang as they scrubbed
so the work went quickly.

This morning I found the sky
as blue as a blue plate
that has been washed in soap-suds
and rinsed in spring water
and dried by a summer breeze!

MICHAEL'S BEGGAR

A beggar wandered down our street—
he looked so tired and worn.
He had wild curls upon his head
and both his shoes were torn.

"Isn't it strange", said Dickie,
and "Isn't it strange" said John,
and "Isn't it strange" said Michael,
"He has no stockings on!"

"That isn't a beggar" said Michael,
"I have him in a book.
Here he is, hung on a cross—
here's his picture—look!"

IN ANOTHER WORLD

Oh, I saw them there—
Shelley and Shakespeare and Valentino
were laughing softly over their sherry,
and Cleopatra was singing to Moses.
And Jack London had a new craft;
he was waiting for a breeze.
And I saw Rupert Brooke standing on a hill—
and all around
there were stars on the ground,
and as they flickered
they made melody,
and MacDowell was trying
so modestly
to gather a few of the smallest—
and I looked for others that I love,
and I saw Jesus there,
but Christ I could not see
anywhere.

EPITAPH

Dreams step gently on her now
that once she knew had eager feet
and light that flashed from smiling eyes
has gone into a deep retreat.

Earth is not her grave—not yet,
tho lips that once were red are pale.
So much of her is shrouded by
the sheltering shadow of a veil.

AUTUMN

The wind has lost
its jollity
and gained a bit
of dignity.

The grass, no longer
green and sweet,
is but a carpet
for our feet.

The sky is blue,
but hard and bold,
and to my confidence
strangely cold.

The red leaves know
an older dance.
Oh, has love turned
to tolerance?

TO MY FRIEND AT THE SEA

He once could laugh,
but now his eyes
are emptier than
November skies.

The sea-gulls taught him
tempest screams—
and good folk fear him
in their dreams.

He will not know
that even pain
is sweet. The sea
has need of rain.

LITTLE ENDS

Beside this twisted tree,
beneath this moon
one stood before the wind
and one sat still
content with little ends of wind
that eddied round the other.

Beside this twisted tree tonight,
beneath the same white moon
two sit content with ends of wind
that eddy round the tree.

And once I knew a time when two
stood splendid in the wind.

MISUNDERSTANDING

Timidly
the new moon
sails over the jagged treetops.

Reverently
the treetops
bow their branches from desire,
in adoration.

CHERRY IN A CHINESE FROCK

Cherry in a Chinese frock
sat upon the pier.
I, passing, whispered down, "Good night!"
She whispered back, "Come here."

She held her finger to her lips,
and so I tiptoed down
to sit beside her on the pier—
she, in her Chinese gown.

Cherry said not one small word,
but pointed to the moon,
and bade me listen to the distant
wailing of a loon.

I listened and I saw the moon,
but more than that was dear—
Cherry's eyes were sleepy as
we sat upon the pier,

and in her hair of copper silk
there was a glint of fire.
And while we stayed there on the pier
the moon kept getting higher

until it warmed her milk-white throat
and lit her dull red mouth,
and all the while a little wind
came blowing from the south.

Oh, Cherry was a moonlit dream—
she in her Chinese gown.
We must have stayed there on the pier
until the moon went down.

NIGHT WANDERING

I walked in the night
with my hair unbound
and my feet were bare
upon the ground.

The grass was wet
and cooled my flesh
and the moonlight shone
in a silver mesh

Down through the boughs
of my willow tree
and made the only
gown for me.

I lay beneath
my willow leaves
that shimmered soft
in silver sheaves.

The moon was warm
and the air was sweet
and unknown flowers
grew at my feet.

I breathed the night
I drank it deep
and I dreamed that I slept
an endless sleep—

PETIT CHANSON

Tu parles d'amour,
mais quand je te baiserais
tu dis non,
que l'amour est quelques chose
de lointain—
qu'il faut
ne le toucher pas.
Comment l'avoir?

MINIATURE

She paints her mouth,
but it is her only banner of bravado.
Anyone can tell
that she is a tragic woman.
Her eyes are heartless and distant
when she speaks,
tho her voice is like the evening wind
setting a wheat field to rhythm.

FOR MARJORIE

The lights in your eyes
dance
like jeweled butterflies
in the sun.

The lowered lashes of your eyes
are cool
like bending ferns
at evening in the wood.

HYLA

She is as pale and cool
as an Easter lily
and her eyes are as serene
as the small evening wind.
Her hair is golden
like the lily's deep heart
and short around her white face.
The green she wears,
like slender leaves,
sheathes a quiet body.
Her name is Hyla.
Which suggests a faint mountain fragrance,
a scent just reaching definition
and then eluding us,
riding softly off
on a breeze.

INTRUSION

What house is this
that in its cool blue rooms
I should learn disenchantment
and new glooms?

What house is this
that gay with unsung song
the hours spent here now
are dull and long?

What house is this
that where warm love has reigned
a calculating cold intent
is feigned?

What person dared
to interrupt its glow
and leave a substitute
I do not know?

A LADY I KNOW

The pillows in her house
are her only thoughts
stuck stiffly up for show.
And every time
I go to see her
I sit on them
hard,
and when I get up to go
they lie flat
and uninviting.

But always when I come again
the same pillows
are in the same place,
stiff and upright
and indignant.

GARDEN PARTY

When you had played, and when your ivory hands
lay resting on the keys, my silence held
the noise of other gratitude away.
I heard you laugh, and saw the tragic moon.
The wind blew soft, and I remembered eyes
of green and amber and a mouth like blood
that smiled upon a solemn shadowed face.

Yes, when you had played I thought of death
and what a foolish prize is his to keep.

PART THREE

STORM

Some evening I shall kiss your blood-red mouth
and lay my cheek against your marble one,
and wonder how you came from out the south
so cool, and yet more brilliant than the sun.

Surely those mad white hands were made for love
and surely that smooth white throat for passion's cry.
Feel the wind blow cold, and look above—
what rides before the clouds that mar the sky?

Something whispers that the time has come
and yet my speech lies still-born in my brain.
My heart that had a song is now grown dumb.
The wind is hushed. I smell the coming rain.

The lightning rips the sky in three white ways.
Now your blood-red mouth shall know my kiss!
I turn to you—and find us in a maze
of friendship. And I hear the lightning hiss.

TO A FRIEND WITH WHOM I MAY QUARREL

No matter what I say or do
all I really love
is autumn red upon the ground
and autumn blue above.

And all the friend that I may need
is any cold proud wind
who never tells me (helpfully!)
how I may have sinned.

FIRE MOON

There was a fire-moon
that climbed a sky
of shadow blue,
and dusted gold
the ghost-white velvet
of the birches
standing at attention
in a row above a path
where dusky memories go.

There was a wish
and then another wish.
They smote each other gently
as two ripples
rise and meet and fall
and rise again.

We lay and watched the ripples,
thousands upon thousands on the lake,
bringing moon-glints down
to light the mist
which rose around us
like a creeping fragrance.

There was this night wind.
And then no wind.
And as the lake was smoothed
by some great quiet,
the struggles done,
the water acquiescent,
we knew a sudden thing
and fled before it
fearing we should be tempted
to adore it.

And next year too
the fire-moon will rise
warming the shadow blue
September skies.
And two white ghosts
will lurk among the birches.

LINES ON WILLFUL HEART AND WORTHY MIND

I must not let my heart speak with my mind
for well I know my mind has things to say
concerning the behaviour of my heart
which my conceited mind thinks not as wise
as it should be with such a mind to teach!
Any mind likes showing any heart
the things that give a person stately joy.
But my small heart goes mincingly along
any street that seems quite fanciful,
not caring whether gaiety be just
or whether dignity dwell in a thought.

Oh no, my heart must never meet my mind
for if it saw my mind come walking near
I know full well that it would turn right round
and flee quite gleefully on eager feet
to places where my mind would never go!

FOR ONE WITH A GUARDED HEART

Out to meet love I went.

The river lay quiet
waiting to bear the moon
on her breast.
The willow trees trailed their fingers
idly in the water's coolness.
And the peach blossoms
gave their fragrance to the night wind
who was kind enough
not to ruffle the river.

And you can say, with cold eyes,
that I should not have met love
as I did.
It might be well
if you walked out some evening
to watch the river
awaiting the moon.

THEOLOGY

I never knew that there would be
protection in conformity

but now I know that beauty must
be hid beneath a mental dust

so theologians cannot scent
our trail of sweet abandonment.

They grow indignant when we chide
but they've no beauty there to hide!

ARGUMENT

"Oh, don't be so prim.
You know I won't hurt you.
No man is charmed
by poorly feigned virtue!

Why were you dancing
out under the trees
with nothing around you
but darkness and breeze?"

"Why were you watching me?
How do you know
The paths that the night winds
and I learned to go?

Shame on you, friend,
for watching me there.
It was more than my body
that I had laid bare!"

BALLAD OF THE GIRL AND THE SAILOR

Ship ahoy for the southern seas
and skies of blue and flame!
They were not free to love: she bore
another good man's name.

She has her housework done at dawn,
her husband off to town,
and then she sits beside her door
until the sun goes down.

"God my God, is this my life,
to sit here till I die
watching beauty and my soul
go walking sadly by?"

(Ship ahoy for the southern seas
and skies of blue and flame!)
"Stop those footsteps while I learn
who softly calls my name!"

Every day at noon I pass her
sitting by her door
longing for the gusty voice
that she will hear no more,

(Ships above for the southern seas
and skies of flame and blue!)
"If this goes on another day,
oh God, what shall I do?"

His husband looks at her and sighs
and sadly shakes his head.
"She has some strange disease, her heart
and memory are dead."

She sits there yet, and once I saw
a sailor at her door.
Her heart had been so long dead
she knew the man no more.

AT F.R.'S HOUSE

Bathing
in a lavender bathroom
must be like going to sleep
in heaven
with the sunset
for coverlet.

And bathing
in a lavender bathroom
at night
without light
must be like swinging
on the stars
with the darkness
for friend.

DECEMBER

It is the quietness of snow
that keeps my heart from making song.
I prefer the way I go
to be tragic and quite long.

Do not stare and think me strange
because I love my sorrow so!
There is sadness in the change
of seasons. There are tears in snow.

And on my small and oval face
it is more fitting (that I know)
that I keep a little place
for the quietness of snow.

GIFT

If I had a yellow salad bowl
(a very large yellow salad bowl,
pale and cool as a November sunset!)
I would carry it in the night
to the hill where winds lie waving.
And with it, one by one,
I would catch the falling stars
till all the skies were bare,
and while the earth wondered in darkness
you could watch the flickering things
slip thru your fingers—
(Warm gold in cold hands.)

SCISSORS-GRINDER

The man across the street
is making stars
with a wheel and a knife.
He is a little god
playing with his own constellations.

AUTUMN'S CHILDREN

Sorrow's child am I
and I
can love but autumn's brown
and autumn's sigh.
And there is one beside myself
who is begot of sorrow
without peace.
And yet we two can stand
beneath a hill
and watch with smiling eyes
the crimson flame
sweep thru high trees.

And there is always
in our autumn wind
the shrill of flutes
and crash of distant drums.

BIRTHDAY POEM

(for C)

The red moon rose. There rose in me
a thing of passionate exquisy.

Like a wave it curled and came
over my heart, and with your name

rocked my soul into a sleep
still as the sea and twice as deep.

In the moon's great colored fire
there brewed a burning red desire.

You were not there and yet I felt
my mouth grow warm and softly melt

upon your own. And hours passed,
and I looked back at the moon at last.

Small it was, and far and cold,
its strange mad color dimmed to gold

and in my heart the sweet desire
was turned to pain, and all its fire

faded, like the moon's warm red,
and melancholy in its stead.

HAUNTED

Hush! I hear a step upon the stair!
It is that ghost again. I saw his face.
Oh God, this is a dismal haunted place:
things that have no body fill the air
and sometimes eyes around me blink and stare!

Take me away to other brighter lands
where wraiths have fear to tread and other skies
show only beauty to my fevered eyes
and twilights are not strange with nebulous hands
that sigh like wind that ruffles unseen sands.

I murdered once, and thought my heart undaunted,
but this I know: I shall be ever haunted.

PART FOUR

SONNETS

3 DEPARTMENT STORE SONNETS

1. MANAGER

A patronizing smirk upon his face,
he stalks in elegance down all the aisles,
pleased to see that every single place
is guarded with its clerk. And then his smiles
fly around the section like wild birds
looking about for some good spot to land.
Now he issues from his lips fine words
and waits for humility on every hand.
And as he passes on his lone parade
he turns as if a proud and royal train
were quite behind him, and a bow is made,
and feeling well, he hums a soft refrain.

Only one bramble ever cut his hide:
stooping to love a woman hurt his pride.

2. BUYER

The clerks in her department must not lean
against the fixtures. They must dust the shelves
before the hour of nine and not be seen
after that hour talking among themselves.
She is more queenly than the noonday sun,
her hair like taffy, eyes ice-green and proud,
Her speech would cut—if she could think of one!
Her voice is clear and low and never loud.
Yet sometimes there is that within her eyes
that is more tragic than her shattered faith,
and sure I am that sometimes silent cries
beat on her soul, and footsteps of a wraith.

She walks across the room with steady pace,
a borrowed dignity upon her face.

SONNET 30.

What am I searching—dawns that light the west
Or stars that march across the sky by day?
What am I needing that the subtle way
Of beauty leaves a throbbing in my breast?
Am I wanting flowers in the snow
Or winter's glory in the summer heat?
Or am I sad to hear the steady feet
Of time go by with muffled steps, and slow?

Much as I cry for, all I really love
Is flaming trees against a dark blue sky
And winds that roar and tremble as they fly
And pale and icy stars hung out above.
So, heart, bow down and fill yourself with this:
The fierceness of beloved autumn's kiss.

JEANNE DELAMARTER.

HELPER OLGA of Waterloo confides with trepidation that in a store there she saw an old-fashioned white petticoat, expressing the hope women are not coming to that.

3. FOR A SUAVE GENTLEMAN

Catlike, he glides across the deep blue floor
with egg-shaped body and an oval mind.
Pompous man, he never looks behind
but pivots silently, till as before
a graven image who will shortly roar
one stands in awe of elegance defined.
Perhaps his dreams are even all refined,
and surely his soul unblemished to the core.

Now here, now there, now in the other room,
like a genii growing from the air
he stands before me, with his silver hair
and steely eyes upon me in the gloom.

(Be still, my heart. What is your courage for?
We're out of his domain beyond that door!)

SONNET 34.

Bitterest of all for me to bear
is knowing beauty stands away, apart,
holding back the flame that warms my heart.
Like the hagglers at a country fair
we bargain over love, and in the blaze
of morning sun seek wisdom with our brains.
What hands are these for counting foolish gains,
what throat is this to sob for other days?
Yours is the creed I love, and yet to you
I spoke of wisdom and security.
Now I wonder what my heart will be
when torn between the wiser and the true.

Beauty waits for me to light the flame
and yet my lips are sealed against her name.

JEANNE DELAMARTER.

WE FOUND DAY FAIR

Cheek to cheek we lay, and I, close-pressed,
feeling the faint low winds on which love comes,
found beauty in the haven of his breast
that boomed against my listening ear like drums
upon whose taut-stretched hide a thousand feet
have beaten, slowly marching. Quietly
we listened to the silent night, and sweet
was every soft night sound to him and me.
Thru the windows out across the bay
where tired lights lay on the water's dark
we saw the gradual coming of the day,
we saw the morning star's last flickering spark.

And yet, when day had come we found it fair
for not desire but love had led us there.

Colorado Springs

Between two pages of Millay
a wrinkled yellow pansy lay:

and I remembered hair like corn,
so yellow in the early morn

and mountains in the early sun
still cold with day not quite begun.

And I have not forgotten snow
upon the mountains, and the glow

of sunlight on your sapphire eyes.
But you were being, oh, so wise

and telling me my future lay
another way. Another way.

—*Jeanne DeLamarter.*

FROM THE NARROW ROOM

Hotly I flung me from their narrow room,
hating the smoothness of each platitude,
hurrying to find a solitude
in my wood of shadowed amber gloom
where the close-leafed maple trees assume
a canopy above a pool—a wood
where I can take a deep and reverent mood,
a forest with the whisper of a tomb.

I put my clothes beside the silent pool
and lay without a sound upon soft sands
that shone beneath the water, pale and cool,
and held the liquid crystals in my hands.

Suddenly two lovers came on me,
endeavoring to talk of ecstacy.

AUTUMN STORM.

Red lightning
in a turquoise sky,
and dark before his hour
comes walking down the street.

The swishing trees
throw the rain wildly
against the dripping windows,
and the wind
is my soul flying.

My thoughts are lost in the storm
like the last wild leaves of autumn.

JEANNE DELAMARTER.

WHY DOES SHE LOVE

Why does she love the artificial scents,
she who knew the perfumes of the earth
when earth was wet and cool with flowered rain?
Does she not remember the sweet pain
of all those little poignant merriments
that came to her at every new spring's birth?

Why does she pin strange jewels in her hair,
she who wore the meadow-clover's grace
more than one soft night in the trysting-field?
Caught unawares it seems her heart might yield
to that old joy of wearing sweetness where
her ebon hair is parted from her face.

But she has learned to use that ancient art
of hiding all her thoughts within her heart.

DISAGREEMENT WITH ONE WOMAN.

She smiled, but as she smiled
her eyes grew colder
and green like arctic ice
and she seemed older.

Her mouth so softly red
and curved and tender
grew tight and still more red
and strangely slender.

She had no need for words—
the thought was plain.
Beyond our silence dripped
October rain.

JEANNE DELAMARTER.

NO LIVING HEART

Strange that there should be no living heart
when such a lovely breast has room for one.
Strange that all this glorious April sun
should not be of itself, but play a part
in waking buried memory and pain
to leap again like black flames in her eyes.
Pitiful, her staring at the skies,
knowing not the warmth of sun from rain.

She has made her god as I made mine
and you made yours, and now he lies, a mess
before her feet—a god so powerless
that he has died beneath the April shine.

This April thing will build her some new god
when beauty blossoms from the pregnant sod.

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